

**Teaching music to support students: How autonomy-supportive music teachers increase
students' well-being**

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Abstract

According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the learning experiences of music students can be partly explained by the autonomy-supportive style adopted by their music teachers. To provide the first in-depth understanding of how music performance teachers support the autonomy of their students and how this support is related to students' well-being, we adopted SDT and the PERMA model of well-being. We provide answers to three fundamental questions about teacher-student relationships in music: 1) Do music performance teachers support the autonomy of their students in higher music education? 2) How do students perceive this support? 3) How does autonomy support affect music students' well-being? Music performance teachers ($n=35$) and students ($n=190$) were recruited from higher music education institutions in the UK. Analyses included mean comparisons of teachers' and students' answers, correlational analyses of teacher-student dyads, and qualitative analyses of open-ended questions. Results showed that teachers and students mostly agreed that teachers provide autonomy support to their students. Teachers' transmission of passion for music and autonomy-supportive behaviours were related to students' well-being, whereas controlling behaviours hindered well-being. Qualitative results showed that although students put well-being at the core of their concerns, music teachers seemed unaware or ill-prepared to face those concerns.

Keywords: autonomy-support, well-being, Self-Determination Theory, teacher-student relationship, music education

From the beginning of the 19th century, pedagogical books for music performance focused increasingly on out-of-context exercises to improve technical skills that provided very little rationale and almost no choices to music students (McPherson & Gabrielsson, 2002). As such, the classical performance training has a long history of cultivating conformity and adherence to strict rules, and offers historical evidence for a culture of controlling teaching styles in music (McPherson & Gabrielsson, 2002). Recent research has concluded that advanced classical music training might still be rather controlling (Evans & Bonneville-Roussy, 2016; Syrjala, Saarela, & Lehtonen, 2005), and higher instrumental music education as a result of this teaching tradition may be an unpredictable and ineffective atmosphere in promoting students' motivation and independence (Gaunt, 2008, 2010). To further understand the issue, in this research, we looked at how the supportive and controlling teaching styles of music teachers in one-to-one settings can influence their students' well-being by illuminating teachers' and students' perceptions of teaching in higher music education institutions in the United Kingdom.

Self-Determination Theory and the support of autonomy

According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT, Deci & Ryan, 1987; Ryan & Deci, 2017), autonomy support concerns the extent to which individuals (e.g. parents, teachers) consider the students' perspective and needs, and provide flexibility without pressure. These interactions from the social environment support an autonomous internalisation of activities in the identity, in which the activity is performed by choice and for the intrinsic pleasure of doing it, or by reasons fully endorsed by the self, such as for learning (Vallerand, 2008). According to SDT, the autonomy-supportive interpersonal style adopted by teachers can greatly influence the outcomes of their students beyond performance (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Reeve, 2015). SDT posits that teachers motivate students using relational skills that range from

highly controlling to highly autonomy-supportive. Autonomy support and control have usually been measured on a single continuum ranging from autonomy-supportive to controlling (Reeve, 2015). However, autonomy support is multifaceted and it is increasingly acknowledged that teachers can display both autonomy-supportive and controlling behaviours (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013). Reeve and Jang (2006) suggest that teachers can promote the autonomy of their students in a variety of ways, that can be summarised into four main components: provisions of 1) choice, 2) rationale, 3) structure, and 4) perspective taking or “empathy”. In contrast, controlling behaviours (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013; Reeve & Jang, 2006) have been considered as a fifth component. These five components have been associated with specific behaviours that teachers do to support or thwart the autonomy of their students. For instance, controlling teachers would impose their own rules to students without giving them choices, rationale, and structure and without being responsive to students’ voices (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013). Controlling teachers promote controlled intentionality, as they put pressures on students so that students would behave the way teachers want. On the contrary, autonomy-supportive teachers consider students as self-determined individuals who are capable of mastering their own learning, of making choices, and who are aware of their own needs. Those teachers provide feedback based on improvement and listen to the needs of their students. When music teachers support the autonomy of their students, they promote free choice and intentionality.

It is important to emphasise that autonomy support relates to promoting autonomy within a given structured environment. That is, autonomy support is not synonymous to a laissez-faire or hands-off form of teaching. Autonomy-supportive teachers recognise that students are in charge of their own learning, but also acknowledge that, in order to master skills, certain tasks

need to be accomplished within a given structure accompanied by guidance. That is, autonomy-supportive teachers provide both choice and structure.

Autonomy support in music teaching and learning

An autonomy-supportive instrumental or vocal teacher would provide choices on repertoire to be played/sung and allow students to work through it their own way, would explain why some musical tasks are needed, would communicate expectations and would listen and be responsive to their students' opinions and questions (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013). Autonomy support adds to the range of theoretical perspectives by qualifying how music teachers differ on the interpersonal teaching styles they use in learning contexts (Reeve, Bolt, & Cai, 1999).

In recent years, music education research has improved awareness on effective teaching through research on teacher-student interactions and specifically through the provision of support to students (Creech & Hallam, 2010; Gaunt, 2008, 2010, 2011; Simones, 2017). Sloboda, Davidson and Howe (1996) have indicated that teachers need to provide encouragement to student musicians, to help them overcome the challenges of daily practice and to foster their persistence. Similarly, Papageorgi et al. (2010) have suggested that teachers might be helpful to their music students by promoting a “healthy and balanced approach to performance” (p. 58).

In music teaching, evidence for both controlling and autonomy-supportive teaching styles can be observed. Duke and Simmons (2006) have found 19 elements of effective teaching at conservatoire levels that can be re-interpreted as a mixture of autonomy-supportive and controlling behaviours. While the teachers provided choices in the interpretation of performance pieces, they also seemed to display controlling behaviours by assigning the repertoire to students without providing choice, and expressing mostly negative feedback with infrequent uses of positive feedback. Duke and Simmons claimed that the teaching behaviours were related to the

best learning outcomes for students, though they did not show empirical evidence to support this claim.

Music students' well-being

The main objective of this study is to examine the links between autonomy support from music teachers and music students' well-being. Over the past decades, psychology researchers have shifted their attention from a single component of well-being, that was mostly seen as a "lack of illness", to a multifaceted construct that aims to describe each of its areas (Seligman, 2011). One prominent model of well-being that has attracted a vast amount of research worldwide is the PERMA model of well-being (Seligman, 2011), that postulates that well-being may be composed of five general components: positive emotions (P), engagement (E), relationships (R), meaning (M) and accomplishment (A). In music, the PERMA model has been scarcely used, with only two studies so far having examined musicians' well-being in light of this model (Ascenso, Williamon, & Perkins, 2017; Bonneville-Roussy & Vallerand, 2018). Similar to general psychology research, in music psychology, Ascenso et al. mentioned that past research on musicians' well-being has focused on the negative aspects of well-being and that little was done to address how to improve well-being efficiently in this population. Their work is a pioneer in the area as it is the first to introduce the PERMA model of well-being to music research. Bonneville-Roussy and Vallerand concluded that investigating well-being in musicians using several proxies of the PERMA model (in their case, musicians' life satisfaction, sense of growth and sense of mastery) provided a clearer picture of the areas of well-being.

Due to the large amount of data required to examine the five components of the PERMA model, in the present research we focused on the first two: the affective and behavioural components. The experience of positive emotions (the P in PERMA) mostly has been

investigated based on scales in psychology research and from a “negative” perspective (absence of negative emotions). In particular, Kenny, Driscoll and Ackermann (2014) found that indices of general psychological well-being (e.g. low scores on trait questionnaire of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, Spielberger, 1983, and Social Phobia Inventory, Connor et al., 2000) are related to low levels of music performance anxiety. In addition, research on passion for music has shown that professional musicians and music students who hold an unhealthy passion (obsessive passion) often see their well-being thwarted (Bonneville-Roussy, et al., 2011; Bonneville-Roussy & Vallerand, 2018). On the contrary, a healthy passion (harmonious passion) towards music is more likely to relate to a greater sense of well-being (through the experience of positive emotions, greater persistence and a general sense of well-being; Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2011; Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013; Bonneville-Roussy & Vallerand, 2018).

The second component of the PERMA model of well-being (the E in PERMA) has been widely studied in music. With students, a greater engagement in music (measured with proxies such as persistence in musical tasks, music-related elective intentions and future career intentions related to music) has been linked with a more supportive teaching style from the principal music teacher, greater autonomous motivation, and a healthy passion (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013; Evans, 2015; Evans & Bonneville-Roussy, 2016; Freer & Evans, 2018; McPherson & Renwick, 2001; Renwick & McPherson, 2002).

Therefore, in the present study, research on the PERMA model of well-being in music justifies the development of a model of music students’ well-being with proxies that included the musicians’ passion for music, their career choices, and their levels of music performance anxiety to investigate the first two components of PERMA.

Autonomy-supportive and controlling teaching styles and music students’ well-being

The benefits of autonomy support in music education are numerous. In general education, Reeve (2009) has found that autonomy-supportive teaching styles were related to students' intrinsic motivation, engagement, persistence, preferences for challenging tasks, self-regulation, performance, and mental health. These outcomes have been found in music education, with the addition of increased interest in music as a whole (see Renwick & McPherson, 2002). Further, with autonomy support, students feel that they are in charge of their music learning, are more likely to be intrinsically motivated (Evans, 2015; Pelletier, Fortier, Vallerand, & Brière, 2001), and are more likely to develop a harmonious type of passion (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013; Mageau et al., 2009). The more autonomous the support, the better equipped a music student may be to overcome any obstacles along the way. That is why in music, autonomy-supportive teachers have been shown to promote well-being (Black & Deci, 2000; Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013).

Indirectly related to autonomy-support, divergences of perceptions between music students' and teachers' views of the content of lessons were suggested as potential risk factors in teacher-student relationships (see Jorgensen, 2000; Koopman, 2017; Gaunt, 2011), and that long-term tensions may result in anxiety (Gaunt, 2011). Barlow (2000) proposed that specific life experiences (e.g. studying with a critical instrumental teacher) can lead to psychological vulnerabilities towards music performance anxiety (MPA). With this regard, Patston (2014) hinted that music teachers might unintentionally facilitate the development of MPA. As such, Patston states: *“Qualitative research ... indicates that around 30% of musicians who leave the profession because of debilitating MPA become educators rather than continue as performers. It seems logical to assume that MPA may be reinforced in the education sector.”* (p. 90).

In terms of perception of teachers' attitudes, successful young music students were more likely to see their teachers as friendly and relaxed than those who stopped playing their instrument, who saw their teachers as more controlling (Davidson, Moore, Sloboda, & Howe, 1998). In a longitudinal study spanning 10 years, Evans, McPherson and Davidson (2013) found that young adults who continued to play a musical instrument reported enhanced feelings of competence, relatedness, and autonomy, that were all related to the provision of autonomy support from their social environment.

Only one piece of research has examined the role of autonomy-supportive and controlling behaviours from teachers on the engagement of music students directly. With a sample size of over 400 musicians, Bonneville-Roussy et al. (2013) found that higher perceived levels of autonomy support from teachers led students to have a more harmonious passion towards music, to want to pursue a career as a music performer, and to persist in their studies in music for a longer period of time. Perceived control from the music teachers led students to want to pursue a career other than music and to actually drop-out from music at a higher rate. To date, the affective experiences of students (the "P" in PERMA) have not been investigated in relation to support from teachers in music.

In sum, SDT, and especially the concept of autonomy support from teachers, has the potential to explain important music-related outcomes of higher education music students. However, a recent review has noted that music education research has not fully integrated SDT and autonomy-supportive versus controlling teaching styles in its range of theoretical perspectives (Evans, 2015). No research to date has directly linked the teaching styles of music teachers and students' well-being (e.g. MPA, passion for music and career choices). Specifically, research has either looked at teaching styles regardless of the students' outcomes (Duke &

Simmons, 2006; Gaunt, 2008, 2010), or has examined students' perceived autonomy support from teachers without gathering views from the teachers themselves (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013). The current study aims to address those gaps.

Objectives and hypothesis

Building on the cited literature about autonomy support and musicians' well-being, using an SDT theoretical perspective, and the PERMA model of well-being, with this research we aimed to provide answers to three fundamental questions about teacher-student relationships in music, in a survey study combining open- and closed-ended questions:

- Do music performance teachers support the autonomy of their students in higher music education?
- How do students perceive this support?
- How does autonomy support affect music students' well-being?

To further validate the roles of autonomy-supportive teaching styles in music, and their roles in the well-being of students, we recruited professional and student musicians and analysed the data in three different ways. First, we examined the congruence of answers of autonomy-supportive styles between teachers and students. Further, we looked at a subsample of teacher-student dyads to examine the effects of autonomy-supportive teaching styles on students' well-being. Lastly, we explored the main themes present in open-ended answers of students and teachers related to the principal constructs of this research. Three constructs were examined as proxies for well-being referring to the PERMA model, that are supported by past research: (a) MPA (Kenny, Driscoll, & Ackermann, 2012), (b) career intentions (Bonneville-Roussy, Evans, Verner-Filion, Vallerand, & Bouffard, 2017; Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013; Freer & Evans, 2018), and (c) passion for music (Bonneville-Roussy & Vallerand, 2018; Bonneville-Roussy et

al., 2011). Generally, we hypothesised that autonomy-supportive behaviours from teachers would lead to enhanced well-being, and that psychological control would thwart well-being.

Method

Participants

Participants were 225 musicians (190 students, 35 teachers) recruited as a convenience sample from four conservatoires and music schools (within University settings) in the United Kingdom between January and May 2017. None of the teachers or students were recruited from the researchers' own institution. The instrumental profiles of the participants and the differences between teachers and students are detailed in Table 1. Of the participants who mentioned, they were aged between 18 and 58 ($M = 24.79$, $SD = 8.93$), had played their instrument for an average of 14.05 years ($SD = 8.99$), and 49% were females. Descriptive statistics split by status (students or professionals) are shown in Table 2.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Procedure

Ethical approval has been granted by Roehampton University. Permission to visit each music school or conservatoire in person was granted in advance via email. A stand was set up for two days in an accessible position either in a café or foyer at each institution, and a research assistant recruited participants on-the-spot during breaks and at lunchtime. Student questionnaires took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete, and teacher questionnaires took approximately 10 minutes to complete. Most participants were enthusiastic about the study and could take part immediately, however, many teachers were difficult to recruit as they tended to remain in their office or teaching room. In some cases, it was permitted for the researchers to

access teachers' timetables so that they could be located in practice rooms and other teaching rooms in between teaching. After the data collection was finished, the questionnaires of some teachers and students were matched (students provided their teacher's name, and teachers gave permission for questionnaire matching) so that direct comparisons between the responses of teachers and their students could be made.

Measures

Students and teachers were asked socio-demographic questions, including questions about their age, gender, musical instrument, and number of years of experience with their instrument. Except when indicated, participants were asked the extent to which each of the statements were true to them, or whether they agreed or disagreed with them, on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Not true at all or I strongly disagree) to 5 (Very true or I strongly agree). The teacher and student questionnaires are included in Supplemental material 2. All of the statistical analyses (including Cronbach's alpha) originate from the data included in the present study.

Measures used with teachers

Well-being

Descriptive statistics are shown in Table 2. **General Passion.** The General Passion subscale of the Passion for Music scale (Bonneville-Roussy, 2017; Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2011, 2013) was used to examine the extent to which students were passionate about playing music. It measures on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1-5 (Strongly disagree-strongly agree) the five criteria for passion: love of music, continued involvement in music and music as an integral part of the person's identity; e.g. "Music is a passion for me.", Cronbach $\alpha = .65$. **Music performance anxiety (MPA)** was measured with one single item: "When performing in front of

an audience, my anxiety level is...” asking students to rate their anxiety on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1-5 (very low – very high).

Autonomy Support

Music performance teachers filled out a questionnaire comprising 15 questions of the teacher-version of the Teacher As Social Context questionnaire (TASC; Belmont, Skinner, Wellborn, & Connell, 1992). The questions comprised four aspects of autonomy-support, that are provisions of choice (seven items, e.g. “I provide choices and options to my students.”, $M = 3.77$, $SD = .61$, Cronbach $\alpha = .78$), structure (two items, “I talk with my students about my expectations for them.” and “Sometimes I feel I don't make my expectations clear to my students.” (reversed), $M = 3.74$, $SD = .87$, $r = .35$), rationale (four items, e.g. “I explain to my students why we learn certain techniques/exercises in music.”, $M = 4.46$, $SD = .51$, $\alpha = .64$) and finally control (two items, “I can't let my students do things their own way.” and “I have to lead my students through their musical technique/exercises/repertoire step by step.”, $M = 2.59$, $SD = .84$, $r = .28$).

Mean comparisons of perceived provision of autonomy support between students and teachers were analysed using the following four items because these items matched exactly between teachers and students: Choice: “I give my students a lot of choices about musical assignments and repertoire”, Control: “I'm always having to tell my students what to do.”, Structure: “I talk with my students about my expectations for them.”, and Rationale: “I explain to my students why we learn certain techniques/exercises in music.”. Means and standard deviations are found in the second section of Table 2.

Qualitative questions

Teachers were asked three open-ended questions related to their experience as music performance teachers at advanced levels: “What do you like about teaching advanced music

students?"; "What would you change about teaching advanced music students?"; and "Is there anything else you would like to tell us regarding your experience as a music teacher at advanced music levels?".

Measures used with students

Well-being

Three measures of well-being were taken with students: General passion, MPA and Future musical intentions. Means and standard deviations of the first two measures are presented in Table 2 (fourth column). **General Passion.** The General Passion ($\alpha = .90$) and **MPA** (one item) were administered to students (see "Measures used with teachers" above). **Career Intentions** (not presented in Table 2 because it is not related to a teacher measure) was measured using four questions from an existing questionnaire (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2017, 2013). Students were asked to rate on a Likert-scale ranging from 1-5 (Strongly disagree to strongly agree) the extent to which they planned to do the following careers after their studies in music (each item was treated separately): have a solo career ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.35$), play in a group (orchestra, choir; $M = 3.29$, $SD = 1.37$), teach music in private ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.26$), and have a career that is unrelated to music ($M = 1.97$, $SD = 1.14$). Each item sought to represent a gradient of involvement in music performance: from a solo career to a total lack of involvement in music as a career.

Autonomy support

Students answered the equivalent four questions of the student-version of the Teacher As Social Context (TASC; Belmont, Skinner, Wellborn, & Connell, 1992) questionnaire (see measure used with teachers): Choice: "I feel that my music teacher provides me with choices and options.", Structure: "My music teacher makes it clear what he/she expects of me.", Rationale:

“My music teacher talks about why we use the techniques/exercises we learn.” and Control: “It seems like my music teacher is always telling me what to do.”.

Qualitative questions

Students were asked three open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire, related to their experience as music students in conservatoires: “What do you like about your music lessons?”; “What would you change about your music lessons?”; “Is there anything else you would like to tell us regarding your experience as an expert music student?”.

Results

Differences in music students and teachers’ autonomy support and well-being

To examine mean differences in music teachers’ and students’ background and well-being outcomes, a series of multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were performed, with professional status (student or professional) as the independent variable, with the whole sample.

Mean differences in perceptions of autonomy support provided (teachers) and received (students)

Differences in the mean-level ratings of provided (for teachers) or perceived (for student) autonomy-supportive behaviours, using the four matched questions, were investigated with a MANOVA 2X4 (status X provision of choice, control, expectations and rationale). Results showed a global effect of professional status on the perception of support, $F_{4, 203} = 6.23, p < .001, \eta^2 = .11$. Student musicians agreed more with their teachers on the provision of choices and rationale for tasks ($F_{1, 206} < 2.77, p > .05$, for both analyses), but rated differently the perception of control $F_{1, 206} = 10.18, p = .002, \eta^2 = .05$, and the provision of clear expectations, $F_{1, 206} = 4.57, p = .03, \eta^2 = .02$. Interestingly, students rated psychological control as being lower than what

teachers perceived, and felt that their teachers had clearer expectations than what teachers reported.

Mean differences in well-being. Mean differences in well-being according to professional status were investigated with a MANOVA 2X2 (status [student vs professional] X passion for music, and MPA). Results revealed a global effect of status on well-being of musicians, $F_{2, 221} = 9.43, p < .001, \eta^2 = .08$. Student musicians and professionals varied in their mean levels of *MPA*, $F_{1, 222} = 16.80, p < .001, \eta^2 = .07$, but had similar levels of *general passion for music*, $F_{1, 222} = 3.73, p = .06$. Table 2 shows that professional musicians experienced significantly lower levels of MPA than students, but similar levels of passion.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

Dyadic influences of teachers on students' well-being

This section asks, when pairs of teachers and students are targeted specifically, what are the music teachers' attitudes and behaviours that are the most associated with their own student outcomes. To do this, we recruited 31 teacher-student dyads and the dyads were asked to answer similarly worded questions, either targeted at student (for teachers) or at music lessons (for students) and the results were examined using bivariate correlations. The correlations are presented in Table 3 and detailed in the sub-sections below. Teachers' number of years of teaching experience was unrelated to any of the student outcomes.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

Teacher musical well-being and student career intentions. Whereas teachers' level of MPA was unrelated to any of their students' variables, we can see in the middle section of Table 3 that teachers' passion for music was related to their students' career intentions in two ways: it

was negatively related to students' intentions to become music teachers, and to pursue a career other than music.

Teacher autonomy support and student well-being. Of the four types of support examined in this study, provision of choice and psychological control were related to student future musical career intentions but unrelated to student MPA and general levels of passion. The provision of choice was positively related to student intentions to pursue a music performance career in musical ensembles, and psychological control was negatively associated with it. In the same vein, choice was negatively associated to student intentions to pursue a career other than music, and psychological control was positively related to it. The provision of structure and rationale were not related to students' career intentions.

Qualitative analysis of open-ended comments

Lastly, we performed a descriptive analysis (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013) of the open-ended answers to the questionnaires in themes that followed the main aspects of the theoretical framework and the quantitative results. The topic of support from music teachers and students' well-being has seldom been investigated in music. Therefore, the themes were explored loosely in relation to the main theoretical background to ensure that the maximum amount of information could be extracted in order to reach saturation. The questions were framed with parallel questions for music teachers and students. In all, we received comments from 91 music students and 32 teachers. Table 4 shows the count and proportions of students and teachers who mentioned the main themes in their open-ended answers.

INSERT TABLE 4 HERE

The following section will detail the qualitative findings of the comments that were analysed in themes that followed the main aspects of the theoretical framework discussed in the introduction and the quantitative results: 1) well-being and 2) autonomy support.

Well-being

The three aspects of well-being investigated in the present paper were passion for music, music performance anxiety, and career intentions.

Anxiety and general mental health and well-being. Surprisingly, mental health and well-being was acknowledged by thirteen students, but was not mentioned by any teachers. Most students found music to be stressful and complained that not enough focus was made on improving, or even maintaining, the well-being of students. One student noted that more support was needed in this area: *“It’s high stress and comes with great highs and lows – but it is all worth it. I think there needs to be more support for musicians’ mental health and wellbeing.”* (Student 3009). Students found it hard to balance music with other life domains, commenting that they found it difficult to speak about mental health issues in musical environments, and that sustaining a healthy mind was a struggle: *“The pressure in conservatoire is hard to manage. Most of my friends have suffered with depression and anxiety attacks.”* (Student 2013). Finally, one student stated that physical injuries were also overlooked in music settings.

Passion. Seven teachers and eight students specifically mentioned passion and their love of music as a major aspect of the musical experience in music lessons. Teachers saw music performance teaching as a way to transmit and share their passion for music *“Everyone is here to learn and passionate about music! We can achieve great things together for the benefit of others.”* (Teacher 2004). Other teachers mentioned that music teaching was a way of helping shape students’ identity. Students mentioned that their teachers shared their passion for music,

which in turn had an influence on their motivation *“I love my teacher and the repertoire I am currently learning. I enjoy learning and improving every lesson. My lessons remind me of why I love doing music every time. My teacher is as passionate as I am.”* (Student 3019).

Career intentions. Nine teachers and eight students mentioned the role of teachers in influencing career choices of students. Teachers viewed that students did not have enough opportunities to play in real-life settings. Students’ responses indicated that career choices outside of solo performance careers were left unexplained to them. The majority of students felt that they had to painfully discover by themselves that not all music students would have the opportunity to have a music performance career, and felt that much more guidance was needed in this respect *“After being at uni and being close to graduating, I know and a lot of my year have accepted that we won’t live out the dream we always wanted. Everyone has that thought but I think uni intensified it.”* (Student 3029).

Autonomy support

The provision of support from teachers was analysed in accordance with the quantitative results, that were categorised into three main themes: structure, rationale and choice, in addition to psychological control. Another aspect mentioned by many participants and included here was the overall emotional availability and perspective-taking from teachers, that is also a main aspect of autonomy support according to SDT (Reeve, 2006).

Choice. The provision of choice and vision of students’ autonomous learning was a major aspect in both students’ and teachers’ experience, as nine teachers and twenty-two students directly commented on it. Teachers enjoyed the discovery of new pieces introduced by students and also the creative challenges that higher education music students face *“I’m able to encourage my students to develop all the creativity they have within them. It’s not for me to tell*

them how they should develop or use that creativity. I'm always excited to see what they choose to do with their skills." (Teacher 3030). Students also saw the provision of choice as a major advantage at advanced levels. They mentioned that teaching was often tailored to what they wanted to do, and enjoyed the freedom of discovering by themselves what works in music. Students' comments reflected those of their teachers. Students enjoyed the openness of their music teachers, and the willingness of music teachers to follow students' choices, such as *"My singing teacher, with her exercises, brings my voice to its best and most effortless state every time, and doesn't perceive any piece that I bring to her as impossible or not right for me now, even if it's ridiculously difficult."* (Student 2038). However, other students commented that the provision of choice was not equally distributed among students, which was seen as an aspect that hindered learning: *"I would say, may not be true of everywhere, that there is a lot of favouritism and a lot of the opportunities are not handed out too fairly."* (Student 2042). Some students observed that they enjoyed a level of freedom that was accompanied by a similar level of structure in teaching *"I like the freedom to explore different aspects of my voice under the watchful eye of my teacher to help rein in my voice, as sometimes I get carried away."* (Student 3010).

Structure. Only one music teacher directly commented on the provision of structure, noting that their level of preparedness was something they would change in their teaching. On the contrary, a more structured approach to music lessons was a major concern for music students, as commented on by fourteen students. Students wished they had more structure and direction in their lessons and more organisation and preparation from their teachers. Only two students commented that their own preparation was lacking.

Rationale. Two music teachers found the provision of rationale to be challenging at advanced music levels, with one teacher commenting *“I enjoy finding new and successful ways to translate complex musical ideas into simple everyday language that explains the subtleties clearly.”* (Teacher 3040). No student mentioned clear (or a lack of) rationale as a positive point or a challenge.

Controlling behaviours. Four teachers and four students indirectly mentioned controlling behaviours in their comments. Teachers felt that the pressure and controlling attitudes came from the institutions, as students had very little time to prepare for assignments and the music curriculum, and the pressure coming from the music institutions was high, both for students and for staff. One teacher felt that students were still trained in the 19th century musical tradition (which we have seen above as rather controlling; Evans, 2015), without much opening to new pedagogical avenues. Student comments mirrored those of teachers. One student observed that the focus of music lessons at higher levels was to train soloists, which was unrealistic in the current situation and put undue pressures on students.

Perspective taking. A comparatively large proportion of teachers (N = 6) and students (N = 28) mentioned perspective taking, empathy, warmth and understanding in their experience of higher music education. Generally, teachers observed the importance of having a warm and trusting relationship with their students. Some teachers said that teaching was a two-way relationship, and they learned as much from students as they taught them. Other teachers, however, experienced a shift in teaching over recent years and thought their students viewed them more as service providers whose role was to provide knowledge. Students viewed the relationship between their teachers and themselves as fundamental in music education: *“It’s underlined the importance of the right teacher – I don’t believe I’d be where I am if I hadn’t*

found my teacher.” (Student 2067). Students used several adjectives to describe the empathetic view of their teachers (trusting, understanding, encouraging, guiding, good at boosting confidence, supporting, helpful and caring). The following quotes summarise well how teachers’ empathy was important for the students, from specific aspects of perspective taking *“I like the fact that I have a close and trusting professional relationship with my tutor, and the fact that she knows me well so that if I am keeping something from her she would realise.”* (Student 2021), to a general sense of trust and understanding *“I feel that my teacher understands me and what I am trying to achieve.”* (Student 3038). Some students felt that this perspective taking or general sense of care was lacking in music lessons, with participants needing to reframe the situation by discussing with the teacher *“Sometimes he hears what I say and improves his behaviour. He could be a little nicer. I would like to leave in a good mood.”* (Student 2030). Other students felt that positivity, encouragements or understanding from teachers was lacking and that teachers were not taking their perspective into account in the lessons.

Discussion

This research aimed to understand how music performance teachers’ teaching styles influence their students’ well-being in higher music education, in light of SDT and the PERMA model of well-being. In parallel questions, students and teachers were asked about perceived teaching styles, conceptualised as being more or less autonomy-supportive, along with their levels of well-being, and students’ future musical career intentions. Descriptive analyses of qualitative data supported the quantitative findings. The findings are discussed in line with the three main research questions.

Music teachers do support the autonomy of their students

Our first research question focused on the overall level of autonomy support provided by one-to-one music performance teachers in higher music education. SDT posits that students achieve the best outcomes and have higher levels of well-being when their autonomy is supported in their social environments and when low levels of control are used (Ryan & Deci, 2017). In the present study, both teachers and students agreed that the teaching styles of music teachers were generally autonomy-supportive, contradicting a previous hypothesis that, in higher music education settings, teaching would lean towards the controlling end (e.g. Evans, 2015). This is an important result that leads to two further hypotheses: 1) The music teaching environment might not be as controlling as was previously asserted, or the context of higher music education might be less controlling than professional music education at lower stages of development (such as one-to-one tuition in childhood or adolescence). 2) Autonomy support is context-specific and some behaviours that may be perceived as controlling in other contexts (such as being told what to do; Reeve et al., 1999) are not perceived as such in music. A plethora of researchers from independent groups in at least three countries have concluded in the general lack of autonomy in higher music education (Evans, 2015; McPherson & Gabrielsson, 2002; Syrjala et al., 2005), which renders the first hypothesis unlikely, though it is possible that higher music education provides more autonomy to students than lower-level conservatoire-like settings. Therefore, it could be that autonomy support is seen differently in music at different levels of education and further research needs to address this issue.

Students and teachers perceive autonomy support mostly similarly

The second research question investigated the way that students perceive the support provided by their teachers. Surprisingly, students perceived the styles of their teachers as being less controlling than the teachers' perceptions of themselves. It may be that teachers are more

critical of their own behaviours or it could also be a difference in perception. For example, some behaviours that are perceived as controlling by teachers, such as always telling students what to do, might be perceived as supportive by students. On the other hand, the provision of structure was perceived differently by teachers and students in both the quantitative and qualitative findings, whereby teachers underestimated how clearly their expectations were expressed to students. In this study, teachers generally thought they were more structured in their lessons what was perceived by students. Overall, however, teacher-student differences yielded small effect sizes (between .02 and .10) which implies that views between teachers and students are more or less convergent, supporting the general view that teachers are autonomy-supportive. Overall, these results show that although it is important to collect views from teachers and students when looking at dyadic relationships, music students and their teachers seemed to be “in tune” regarding teachers’ teaching styles. The one-to-one teaching and learning environment observed in the present study is likely to facilitate greater opportunity for honest exchange of opinions between student and teacher when compared with group settings. This in turn may increase students’ perception of autonomy-supportive behaviours from their teachers. This is supported by SDT research whereby acknowledging students’ feelings and providing them with opportunities to ask questions are fundamental components of autonomy-supportive educational environments (Reeve & Jang, 2006).

Responses to the open-ended questions provided more insight into the teacher-student views of support. A similar proportion of students and teachers mentioned the provision of choice and rationale, which included the similar themes of openness, and the tendency of teachers to support students’ choices. Further, a larger proportion of students mentioned structure as a cause for concern, whereas fewer students than teachers mentioned controlling behaviours.

It is important to note that the majority of students who commented on the provision of structure wished their teachers would employ a more systematised approach to teaching with clearer expectations. In contrast, only one teacher mentioned structure and acknowledged that they, as teachers, could be better prepared for lessons. In terms of psychological control, teachers felt that the controlling attitudes were coming from the musical institutions and that they somewhat felt compelled to impose that rigid structure on to students. This problem was combined with the students feeling bound to focus on one single aspect of music performance (solo performance), and that this created unrealistic expectations.

Teachers' abilities to take their students' perspective was frequently highlighted in the qualitative analysis of both students and teachers. Students indicated that a warm, trusting and empathic relationship between teachers and students was fundamental at all levels of music education. Music teachers communicate perspective-taking and general responsiveness by replying positively to student comments or questions, such as "Good point" (Reeve & Jang, 2006, Table 1, p. 211). Even adult students are responsive to perspective-taking teaching styles, as shown in the present study. Perspective-taking creates a sense of trust and understanding that facilitates learning and can also buffer the negative effects of conflicts.

Autonomy support from music teachers is likely to increase well-being in students and control is likely to decrease it

The third question examined the supportive role of teachers and their students' well-being. In light of the PERMA model of well-being (Seligman, 2011), two main aspects of well-being were linked with autonomy-support: affect (the "P", for positive emotions) and engagement (the "E"), measured by three proxies in the present research: MPA, passion and

career intentions. Overall, increased levels of autonomy support from music teachers were linked to increased well-being using the three proxies.

Further, teacher-student dyads analysis has shown that music teachers' years of experience and their overall level of MPA did not influence students' well-being. In mainstream education, researchers have found no clear links between the number of years of experience and students' positive outcomes (e.g. Lane, Givner, & Pierson, 2004). Since autonomy support is related to teachers' beliefs about quality of teaching, experience may lead music teachers to polarise their views over time, therefore becoming either more autonomy-supportive or controlling (according to their beliefs about which approach is better), therefore annulling the potential benefits of experience on outcomes (see McLachlan & Hagger, 2010). This also suggests that less experienced music performance teachers can teach in an autonomy-supportive style and vice versa.

With regard to passion, the current study shows that students were significantly more likely to either pursue a music teaching career (rather than music performance) or to drop out of music if their teacher indicated lower levels of passion, with large effects. Furthermore, a trend towards significance implied that the more the teacher was passionate, the more students wished to pursue a music performance career in group settings. Through their passion and love of music, teachers may convey a sense of excitement and devotion to music that encourage students to persist and persevere in the face of adversity (Bonneville-Roussy, 2017; Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013).

The level of autonomy support was linked significantly with students' career intentions. The provision of choice and an absence of controlling behaviours from teachers were positively linked with students' intentions to become ensemble performers, whereas students' intentions to

drop out of music were negatively linked with provision of choice and positively correlated with psychological control. In sum, the provision of choice and the relative lack of controlling behaviours from teachers were conducive to students' musical career intentions with large effects.

One further point worth noting is the issue of students' mental health and well-being as a result of the qualitative investigations of the teacher-student relationships. Mental health was a concern in students. All of the students who mentioned mental health said that not enough was done to improve the well-being, or at least to alleviate the anxiety of students. Some students mentioned that, at the general institutional level, students' mental health should be part of the curriculum, as they stated that music at advanced levels was inherently stressful. More concerning, however, was that none of the teachers mentioned students' general mental health, anxiety or well-being in their open-ended answers. One explanation could be that teachers felt that students' mental health was not in the remit of their teaching, and therefore did not discuss it explicitly. It could also be that music teachers generally feel ill-equipped to face the health queries of their students. Either way, since music teachers are often the primary academic contact of music students at advanced levels, providing teachers with tools and skills to approach the music-related mental health issues of their students would be a good way of increasing well-being awareness.

Music teachers' interpersonal supportive behaviours that are beneficial to students

This research offers strong evidence to support the hypothesis that autonomy-supportive music teachers enhance the general well-being of students. In Table S1 (Supplemental Online Material 1), we offer a summary of the behaviours that have been shown to be related to the provision of autonomy support from teachers in the present and in past research. The behaviours

come from a fully validated scale (Belmont et al., 1992) and are supported by empirical evidence (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013; Freer & Evans, 2018; Reeve & Jang, 2006). Past research has mostly focused on classroom teaching and therefore the behaviours are expected to be generalisable to group music teaching (Reeve & Jang, 2006). These behaviours are interpersonal styles and relate to how music is taught and not what is taught during lessons, and therefore are expected to take little or no time away from the lesson content. In addition, autonomy-supportive teaching styles are teachable and have long term effects on teachers (Reeve, 1998, 2009).

Limitations and Future Research

This study has three main limitations. First, it was questionnaire-based and may lack ecological validity, although we took various steps to ensure validity of the data by using mean comparisons, analyses of teacher-student dyads and qualitative descriptive analyses. Second, the total sample size was of more than 200 musicians, but the sample size of the dyads consisted of 31 pairs of teachers and students and therefore it may have lacked statistical power. In addition, most of the answers to the open-ended questions were short (typically less than 200 words) and this limited the depth of the qualitative analyses performed on them. Finally, the sample consisted of teachers and students of UK music institutions, and the results may not be generalisable to other countries or cultures. The limitations could be addressed by using observation-based, cross-cultural research that looks at student-teacher interactions in real-life contexts, using a larger sample of dyads, in addition to in-depth qualitative interviews. The role of autonomy support could also be observed longitudinally to examine how teaching styles impact students in the long run. Finally, intervention-based studies using a pre-post approach has the potential to shed light on the benefits of supportive behaviours before and after the intervention.

Conclusion

This study reports a first attempt to examine teacher supportive behaviours that are related to their own students' well-being. Three main findings are worth highlighting. Firstly, music teachers and students in the present study mostly agreed that teachers provide autonomy support to their students. This result is surprising as music performance education is generally seen as controlling. Secondly, the transmission of passion towards music and the provision of choice are related to the most beneficial well-being outcomes of students, whereas controlling behaviours from teachers hinder students' well-being. Thirdly, although students put well-being at the core of their music learning concerns, music teachers seem unaware or ill-prepared to face those concerns. Evidence-based workshops and practical tools targeted at teachers and music institutions on the content of constructive support and mental health issues of students are fruitful avenues for future research and practice.

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Table 1. Background Information

Instrument	Occurrence (%)	Background	
		Teachers	Students
Voice	25.5	Age	42.21 (8.76) 21.69 (4.06)
Piano/organ	22.5	Experience	30.00 (9.63) 11.01 (4.49)
Woodwind	21.6		
String	12.5		
Brass	9.9		
Percussion	3.9		
Not known	3.9		

Notes. N = 225. Age and experience are presented in years. Standard deviations are under brackets.

Table 2. Mean Differences in Participants' Well-being and Autonomy Support

	Variable	Teachers	Students
Well-being	MPA	2.65 (1.03)	3.46 (1.07)
	General Passion for music	4.85 (0.28)	4.65 (0.62)
Autonomy-support	Choice	3.91 (0.87)	4.18 (0.85)
	Structure	3.91 (1.11)	4.26 (0.81)
	Rationale	4.47 (0.66)	4.28 (0.86)
	Control	2.91 (1.19)	2.23 (1.13)

Notes. Standard deviations are under brackets. MPA = music performance anxiety. For the autonomy support variables, teachers' ratings are their own ratings and students' ratings are students' perceptions of teachers. The variables have a theoretical range between 1 and 5.

Table 3. Dyadic correlations between teacher variables and student well-being

		T. Exp.	Teacher Well-being		Teacher Autonomy Support			
			MPA	Passion	Choice	Struc.	Ration.	Control
Student Well-being	MPA	-.07	.06	-.28	-.29	-.12	-.11	.22
	Passion	.16	-.04	.22	.28	-.05	.11	-.09
	Intentions: Soloist	-.04	-.19	-.07	.27	-.02	.06	-.04
	Intentions: musical ensembles	-.21	-.05	.32	.54**	-.03	.17	-.44*
	Intentions: music teacher	.18	.13	-.37*	-.03	-.14	-.30	.16
	Intentions: unrelated to music	-.14	.09	-.52**	-.44*	-.16	-.23	.38*

Notes. N = 31 teacher-student dyads. T. exp. = Teachers' number of years of teaching experience. MPA = Music performance anxiety;
Struc. = Structure; Ration. = Rationale.

* < .05; ** < .01

Table 4. Number and proportions of teachers and students who mentioned each of the main themes in their open-ended answers

		Teacher	Student
		(%)	(%)
Well-being	Anxiety, general WB	0	13 (14%)
	Passion	7 (22%)	8 (9%)
	Career intentions	9 (28%)	8 (9%)
Autonomy-support	Choice	9 (28%)	22 (24%)
	Structure	1 (3%)	14 (15%)
	Rationale	2 (6%)	0
	Control	4 (13%)	4 (4%)
	Perspective taking	6 (19%)	28 (21%)

Notes. Numbers are counts. Teachers N = 32; Students N = 91; WB = Well-being